

# UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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It is gratifying to know that there is a discerning and intelligent audience in Chicago. At the recent concert of Dietrick Fischer - Dieskau at the Auditorium, he presented an impeccable program to an audience of 4200 people who were as dedicated to good music as the artist they were hearing. What has happened to the ballet audiences? They are definitely not the same thing. In fact, going to the ballet now days is a bit like going slumming. Maybe it is the ballet companies themselves. The Australian Ballet drew a strictly "Show Biz" crowd, attracted mostly by the name of Nureyev - not from any knowledge of what they were seeing. His performance was a travesty of what he could have been under intelligent direction. The Joffrey Ballet also drew this type of audience with those 'non-Ballets', 'Astarte', "Clowns" and "Trilogy". Those houses were papered and cut-rated to the hilt. The campaign of cut rate tickets, started a full month ahead of time and at the last, not honoring them. Why doesn't a company come here with moderate prices and no cut rates, which has so many abuses, creating bad feelings. It rather galls one to have paid \$9.00 for a ticket and find that the person next to you only paid half that amount. The Winnepeg Ballet had the affrontry to present an out-and-out pornographic ballet on a matinee program with a house filled with children. One wonders what they think they are trying to prove. The one bright spot of the season, so far, was the performance of Alwin Nikolas and his company. We were fascinated by his genius in every stage craft and his unbelievable imagination. "Echo" is probably a very great ballet, if one could see it oftener. It is a frightening and desperate comment on present day life - exceedingly beautiful at moments and desperately humorous the next - as only good tragic-comedy can be.

On February 12th, the Stone/Camryn Ballet danced two programs at the Hauser Junior High School with a group of 26

dancers. The program was mainly "Eine Kleine Nachtmusic" and the "Austrian Suite". This was the sixth time we have played this school since 1952, when we gave the concert that had just returned from a tour of eight states. In 1956, the program was "Trio Variations", "Duffy" and Divertissements - 1958 "Ferdinand and the Bull" and Divertissements - 1961 "Hansel and Gretel" with JOHN NEUMEIER and KAREN DRYCH - 1966 "A Friend is someone Who Likes You". - The Spring Concerts at St. Alphonsus will be April 30th and May 2nd, and we promise to do a program that you can bring children to see - it is getting so that many ballets are not fit for a child. On March 23rd. the school will be closed for the taping of a TV program on the training of a dancer. ALAN BAKER will be the director and the program is "Whys and Otherwise" on Channel 5. Approximately 20 boys and girls from SC were used in the overstuffed performances of "Petrouchka" - the school looks at this with a jaundiced eye, as the experience gained is so trivial and the expense of doing it immense. DOLORES LIPINSKI has left the city to join CHARLES BENNETT'S group - The First Chamber Dance Company up through the month of May. CARREN CHESHER has set her wedding date for May 1st.

"NAMES"- Memorable persons, characters, or things. (according to the dictionary)

A little heap of dust,  
A little streak of ruse,  
A stone without a name -  
Lo! hero, sword and fame!

-Ambrose Bierce.

If my personal reminiscing on Chicago dance presents a conglomerate group of names, it is because of my broad variety of performances and experiences in this area, which include opera, ballet, festivals, pageants, movie houses, musicals, plays, reviews, recitals and concerts, cantomimes, night clubs and floor shows,

programs with symphony orchestras, TV and vaudeville. Quite naturally, one meets and knows many people and people have names.

The recent exhibit at the Chicago Public Library entitled "Chicago Dances" gave an infinitesimal idea of all that has come to pass in the dance scene here. It would be interesting to know why the city so niggardly lacks appreciation and support for the local talent that must leave for more appreciative fields. The truth remains, the city is notorious in supporting the highly advertised products from other cities - even when inferior. Irving Kolodin, of the Saturday Review of Literature, recently wrote that Chicago needed either a publicity agent or a new Mayor to let the world know what it had right here at home.

The 'come-lately' teachers, writers and dancers who know nothing of Chicago's past are inclined to berate it and intimate that they are pioneering dance in this wasteland of Mid-America. A city that can boast of having had as teachers, such names as, Bolm, Maximova, Berge, Swoboda, Stuart, Novikoff, Fokine, Kosloff, Bourman and Mascagno, has nothing to be ashamed of. There are indeed many others who have made an imprint on the city's cultural life. Pavley-Oukrainsky were not the best possible teachers, but they probably did more to popularize ballet at a time when it was most needed.

In the past, the Opera had some of the great names of dance on its directorial staff. From 1910-13 Luigi Albertieri, forster-son of Enrico Cecchetti, was the ballet master and director of our opera. He was followed by V. Romeo, another Italian (1913-14) and a Frenchman, Francoise Ambrosin (1914-17). They were before the advent of the Russian Ballet Masters, Andreas Pavley, Serge Oukrainsky, Adolph Bolm, Veschlav Swoboda and Laurent Novikoff. These were the important years in the development of dance in Chicago (1918-36) and the ballet was vastly more successful on the Opera Companies transcontinental tours than in its own hometown. From these years, almost up to the present, Ruth Page has had the ballet and contributed enormously to this rich background. Many of the standard Classical Ballets seen today, were done by these ballet masters (mentioned many times in the Upstairs Club Bulletin).

Chicago has been a rich training ground for dancers, and this too, is never publicised as it should be. Our dancers appear in great numbers in New York and around the world. The first accepted American Ballerina in Europe was none other than Chicago's Anna Ludmilla. Because there has been little opportunity to dance locally, the dancers have spent more time in the studio learning their craft and, consequently, are better trained. In the early schools, we find the names of Mary Wood Hinman (Doris Humphrey's first teacher), Madeline Hazlitt (Edna McRae's first teacher), Mabel Wentworth (teacher of Anna Ludmilla and Edna Lucille Baum), Marie Landry (who started Marie Veatch and Mary Vandas), Mme Marie Yound, and the Kretlow family, all contributed their share of pioneering dance in the city.

With the advent of the Pavley - Oukrainsky and Adolph Bolm schools, Chicago began in earnest to train dancers. The dancers who came out of these schools or were influenced by them are very numerous. Disinterested moderns, may or may not know or remember the names of Portia Mansfield, Maria Nemeroff, Paul Batchelor, Iva Kitchell, Edris Milar, Julian Francesco, Edward Caton or Zenia Zarina, all of whom came out of the P & O school. Edna McRae, Merriel Abbott and Ruth Austin were on their teaching staff in the early 20's. Under the Bolm regime, came Anna Ludmilla, Ruth Page, Thalia Mara, Celeste Holm, Harriet Lundgren, Josephine and Hermene Schwartz, Vincenzo Celli, Mark Turbyfill, Julia Barashkova and a host of others. In my own period at Bolm's were Elise Reiman, Berenice Holmes, Jorg Fastang, Marcia Preble, Lee Foley, Ann Barzel, Florence Voss, Grace Cornell, Boris Volkoff, Alta Warshaska and Eleanor Block. All were names that meant a great deal in the dance world and some of them still do in the teaching profession.

The Pavley-Oukrainsky Ballet toured extensively over the States, through Mexico and South America with popular success. They extended themselves too far by opening branch schools in other cities and gradually faded away.

In 1924, Bolm was one of the artists who helped organize the Chicago Allied Arts, one of the first attempts at a seri-



ous Chicago Company. Bolm brought two o world famous artists to perform in his ballets - Tamar Karsavina and Ronny Johansson. I do not have programs at my disposal, but I do know that Ruth Page, Mark Trubyfill, Berenice Holmes and Marcia Preble were members of the group. Later, Bolm had his own "Adolph Bolm Ballet Intime", which toured and the only one I saw had Agnes De Mille, Vera Mirova, Berenice Holmes and Elise Reiman as stars. In 1928, Bolm did the first performance of "Apollon Musagete" at the Library of Congress in Washington with Page, Holmes and Reiman. His background as one of the great male dancers was a great inspiration to many dancers here and most people came under his influence at sometime. He was the first to dance the role of "Prine Igor" and was also famous for his Pierrot and Petrouchka characterizations with the Diaghileff Ballet. Present day teachers studying in the school at that time were Edna Mc Rae, Edna L. Baum, Marie Veatch, Berenice Holmes, Elizabeth Werblowsky, Florence Voss and Jorg Fasting. Bolm also gave his students the advantage of studying with famous guest teachers of which I remember Veschlav Swoboda, Marcel Berge, Jose Alvarez and Maria Montero.

When Bolm left Chicago for California, Laurent Novikoff took over and all of our generation profited by study in his school and at the opera. Of the younger set that came from his teaching were Helen Craxer, Vida Brown, Robert Padgent, Richard Reed, Kenneth Mac Kenzie, Betty Gour, Teresa Rudolph, and Kittie Andrews, all of which were and still are prominent in the ballet and Theatre world - without performing much in their own home town.

The Comiakoff Russian Ballet School which flourished for a time had a number of students who, with study in other schools, went far in the profession. To name a few - Bud and Jack Tygett, Joseph Kaminski, Etta Buro, Jane and Charles Bockman and the now successful John Prinz began there. This group is a credit to any school.

Over a period of years, most Chicago dancers have studied in several schools and the main progression being from Bolm's to Novikoff and then on to Mc Rae or Stone-Camryn. But almost every school has had its one or half dozen successful students that went into the profession. Hazel Sharpe, a

pupil of Albertieri, and an excellent teacher put out very well trained girls. Albertina Vitak (later a well known dance critic) and Albia Kavan of Ballet Theatre were fine examples. Out of Mc Rae's school came Carol Lawrence, Alan Howard, Stanley Herbertt, Patricia Klekovic and with many other professionals profiting by her stern training. John Petri, an off-shoot of the Pavley-Oukrainsky was the teacher of Rosiko Sabo, a soloist in Ballet Theatre, George Verdak of Butler University and Richard Franz. Edna L. Baum, for many years maintained a thriving school, famous for its baby work-but out of that came Ruth Ann Koesun, Loretta Rozak, Alfred Floyd, Marion Finholt, and Turner Lundgren. Berenice Holmes had a group in the 30's that included, Sono Osato (Ballet Russe) Kenneth Johnson, Harry Bernstein (Adelphi College), Edith Allard, Aaron Girard (well known as a teacher in Sweden) and Fred Strobel of the Washington Ballet.

While Sybil Shearer is now thought of as a Chicago dancer, she is not actually a Chicago product. One of her earlier teachers was Doris Humphrey. Other moderns who began dance here were Pearl Lang, Kathryn Dunham, Talley Beatty, Eloise Mocr, Nik Krivitsky, Gary Roberts, Ertha Kitt and the first (but not really a Duncan dancer), Diana Hubert. Of the finest teachers of modern here, were Berta Ochsner, Inga Weiss and Pat Boyer. In the late 30's Eleanor Block made a last concerted effort to get a group of moderns together, among them Leyah Lucatsky, Anna Kurgens and Ann Port.

What Chicago has needed more than anything in the world is writers and on this score, we have been sadly neglected. Ann Barzel stands almost alone in her support of local talent and has done nobly. Selma Jeanne Cohen, another writer from Chicago, has devoted herself entirely to the New York scene. In the past, we had Albertina Vitak, Marion Schillo and Marya McAuliffe, who did contribute some. All the present writers are interested and write only about the outsiders.

In the choreographic field, Bob Fosse comes from Chicago. While here, he was a hoofing partner to Charles Grasse and had one summer in our school. He needs no introduction. Many SC boys have worked



for him and even assisted him. Much younger, John Neumeier, an SC product, has had considerable success in Europe and works only in the serious ballet medium. Many others of our boys have been choreographers with some success, such as John Sharpe, Loyd Tygett, Jack Tygett, Charles Bennett and, recently, James Moore.

It might seem vain to mention all the dancers produced under our influence, so will refrain and only mention a few that we think Chicago should be proud of, as well as we. On the feminine side, Bonnie Mathis, Ruth Ann Koesun, Dolores Lipinski, Naomi Sorkin, Alexis Hoff and Judy Conway. On the male side - John Kriza, Kelly Brown, Charles Bennett, John Neumeier, Ronald Frasier and Charles Schick. John Barker, another from this background is making a name as a translator of Russian technical Ballet books. He also maintains a New York school.

It is easy to know where to start in mentioning names of Chicago Dancers - but where do you stop? The more one thinks about it, more and more names come to mind. For instance - Mildred Prehl, where John Kriza and Elsie Stigler began, out in Berwyn. Many of us worked for Dick and Edith Barstow, Dorothy Dorben, Dorothy Hild, Fred Evans and Russet, who was one of the Poles in Pavlowa's company. Back in the 30's, these local dancers had good careers in other areas - James Jamieson, Betsy Ross, Janice Rule, Jack Warner Dorothy Hill, Helene Constantine, Muriel Grey, Barbara Atkins and Louise Glenn - all very excellent dancers and performers.

Many dancers in vaudeville and night clubs played so much around here in the 20's and 30's that they became almost part of the city life. Valodia Vestoff and his sister, Floria, spent much time working the clubs here and even did some teaching. Arthur Corey, besides appearing in vaudeville, did concerts here with other local dancers. Gilda Grey, a Milwaukian, but a staple performer in clubs and vaudeville. While a student, I ushered at the great State-Lake Vaudeville Theatre and these performers were a constant inspiration to dance students - Buster West, Ledova, Nattova, Bill Robinson, James Barton, Elsa and Eduardo Cansino, Moss and Fontana and Tony and Sally de Marco.

The Chicago Theatre in the 30's maintained a ballet with a ballet master and some very pretentious shows were presented. Anatole Bourman, Russet, Fred Evans, Dorothy Hild and now and then Merriel Abbott directed these shows. Local dancers appeared in the corps and as soloists. Mona Dell, Bentley Stone, Ruth Pryor, Teresa Rudolph, Dorothy Burke, Jose Alvarez and myself worked as soloists.

The majority of names mentioned in this article do not go much beyond the late 50's. This is about the time of the English invasion with Ellis-DuBoulay, the Lunnons and Anne Woolliams, good teachers but here only long enough to rework dancers started by other schools and not really time to produce their own.

A younger generation of teachers is on the way up and the future will be in their hands. Sheila Reilly has done wonders with the National Music Camp and at Marquette University. Joe Kaminsky, Bonnie McCullogh, Bill Reilly, Roberta Rehberg, Donnie Jo Kapsalis and Marion Harvey all have their own schools and are doing credible work. Another promising one is Julie Bicking Walder, who is just beginning. Teaching is an uphill task and not until one has had ten or more years of experience can one really claim it as a profession.

Almost anyone and their grandmother can and will recall names I've missed and no doubt will tell me about them. Oh! Yes, how could I close without mentioning some of the dancers whose reputations were made in Chicago during the World's Fair of '33 and '34. Most popular were the beautiful pair, Veloz and Yolanda. Then there was Sally Rand, Faith Bacon and Tina Valen and the hundreds of local dancers employed at the English, German, Spanish, Italian and Hawaiian villages and the Ford Symphony Gardens. Those were fun days and the final breaking up of the Great Depression.

Many of the dancers mentioned above have had brilliant years in Ballet Russe, Ballet Theatre (at one time there were ten Chicagoans in this company), Modern dance Companies, Musicals, Movies and TV from coast to coast and border to border. A very great percentage are teachers with their own schools. - carrying on what Harry Bernstein, Director of The Adelpia College

Dance Department speaks of as the "Chicago School of Dance".

Fame is a slimy thing, the public is extremely fickle and forgetful and they may love you one moment and the very next - they never heard of you. Remember that.

Josh Billings described it - "Fame is climbing a greasy pole for #10 and ruining trousers worth \$15."

Joyce Cary said - "Fame isn't a thing. It's a feeling, like what you get after a pill."

W. Somerset Maugham wrote - "Being famous is like having a string of pearls given you. It's nice, but after a while, if you think of it at all, it's only to wonder if they're real or cultured."

In Wendell Phillips words - "How prudently we proud men compete for nameless graves, while now and then some starveling of Fate forgets himself into immortality."

And Eugene Field - "Here in the road to fame and fortune lies: put not your trust in vinegar - molasses catches flies."